

/barbara/network

Barbara Lincoln

TechMail

Wed, 16 Sep 92

[fizz@EAGLE.MIT.EDU (Robyn Fizz): WAIS article you requeste

Barbara Lincoln, Page 1

Return-Path: <barbara>
Date: Wed, 16 Sep 92 10:58:05
From: barbara (Barbara Lincoln)
To: fizz@EAGLE.MIT.EDU, tmac@mit.edu
Subject: [fizz@EAGLE.MIT.EDU (Robyn Fizz): WAIS article you requested from MIT's i/s newsletter]
Cc: barbara

thanks so much for getting a copy of this article to me!
I would like to add it to our WAIS bibliography...Could you send me the name and date of the publication? (Is it MIT i/s newsletter?)
thanks again!
-barbara

----- Forwarded Message

Return-Path: <fizz@EAGLE.MIT.EDU>
Date: Tue, 11 Aug 92 15:14:36
From: fizz@EAGLE.MIT.EDU (Robyn Fizz)
To: barbara@quake.think.com
Subject: WAIS article you requested from MIT's i/s newsletter
Cc: tmac@MIT.EDU, sbjones@mit.edu

WAIS: A New Development in Information Services

Teresa MacRae, Network Services
Susan Jones, Publication Services

In 1989, Apple Computer, Thinking Machines, and Dow Jones began joint development of WAIS (Wide Area Information Servers), a prototype information resourc

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9/26 asked again

Article was published in June 1992 i/s.

Return-Path: <barbara>
Date: Thu, 02 Jul 92 15:24:37
From: barbara (Barbara Lincoln)
To: tmac@MIT.EDU
Subject: [Brewster Kahle <brewster@Think.COM>:]

Hi. I work with Brewster Kahle at Thinking Machines on the WAIS project. I had two questions. One, wondering if you had a final version/copy of this document? Two, if you would mine if I added it to the WAIS bibliography that i maintain? thanks, barbara
----- Forwarded Message

Return-Path: <brewster>
Date: Sun, 17 May 92 12:16:23 PDT
From: Brewster Kahle <brewster@Think.COM>
Sender: brewster
To: barbara
In-Reply-To: Barbara Lincoln's message of Wed, 06 May 92 11:05:03
<9205061804.AA18421@quake.think.com>

The lower document is a help document for using WAISStation.

-brewster

Date: Wed, 06 May 92 11:05:03
From: barbara (Barbara Lincoln)

Should I add this to the bibliography? If so - and here's the old question - what should the verbage be?
----- Forwarded Message

Return-Path: <morris>
Date: Thu, 23 Apr 92 09:44:54 PDT
From: Harry Morris <morris@think.com>
Sender: morris
To: wais-crew@think.com, smray@think.com, barbara
Subject: [tmac@MIT.EDU: I/S article & Quick Guide]
Comments: Hyperbole mail buttons accepted, v3.0P.

I think we can add this to our documentation

=====
Date: Thu, 23 Apr 92 06:40:07
From: tmac@MIT.EDU (Teresa MacRae)
To: morris@quake.think.com
Subject: I/S article & Quick Guide

I wondering if you would like to review the draft of the article I will be submitting to the I/S paper (here at MIT). It is meant to be purely informational. If I have said anything incorrect please let me know. I have also included a Quick Guide for Macintosh users.

Thanks again!!
If you are too busy that's O.K. too. I understand.

Teresa MacRae

WAIS - A NEW DEVELOPMENT IN INFORMATION SERVICES

On-line information services are a critical asset to anyone who needs information. The executive who needs to make informed decisions, the research scientist trying to keep abreast of efforts in her/his field, the student trying to learn, are all examples of individuals who need information. The Wide Area Information Servers (WAIS) system is a prototype effort which automates the search and retrieval of many types of electronic information over a wide area network. This research project began as a joint development effort between Apple Computer, Thinking Machines, and Dow Jones targeting business executives.

What is the intent?

The WAIS system is a compute-to-compute approach to information search and retrieval. The primary goal of the project was to show "how current technology can be used to open a market of information services that allow a user's workstation to act as librarian and information collection agent from a large number of sources." (reference Kahle, Brewster ; "Wide Area Information Server Concepts"; 1/3/89)

What is WAIS?

The WAIS user-interface software transfers the processing of user interactions to the local workstation. The underlying protocol is an extension of the standard Z39.50 protocol which isolates the database server specific query method from the application. This seemingly transparent access to various database servers allows WAIS to provide an English-language-style query language. WAIS provides an easy to use user-interface which is consistent across workstation platforms (e.g. Macintosh, PC, Unix-station), and an information retrieval protocol which acts as a translator between the client and many types of database servers.

How does it work ?

Typically the user initiates a search for information by querying a directory of servers with a particular topic. The directory supplies information about sources which are pertinent to the topic in question. The user formulates questions in an English-language-style and continues to refine the search using the newly found sources. Each source and document entry is rated to provide an indication of relative importance. In addition, WAIS provides a means of incorporating "relevance feedback". This allows the user to select key documents or sections of documents and then continue the search with the intent of finding documents "which are similar to" the documents identified. Once an appropriate document is found it may be downloaded to the users workstation effortlessly. In addition, WAIS allows users to continuously or periodically poll sources with successful queries for access to the most current information available.

What information is available?

Although the WAIS system is fairly new, there are several for-free databases available. The for-pay sources are not yet available to the public. Every source is registered with the directory of servers and can be browsed but looking at the "catalog for database" for the directory of server. This catalog is a result of an unsuccessful search for a particular topic using the directory of servers as a source.

Some examples of for-free databases include:

- * The CIA World Factbook
- * A collection of molecular biology abstracts
- * A poetry server which contains a number of classical and modern poems (maintained by MIT)
- * Weather maps forecasts. (information originating from other sources but repackaged by Thinking Machines)
- * Columbia Law Library Card Catalog
- * Samples of articles in the Wall Street Journal

Sources planned for the future include:

- * The Library of Congress card catalog
- * Articles for the Wall Street Journal, Barons, and other magazines (Maintained by Dow Jones)

Where to get the latest version?

The client versions of WAIS are available via anonymous FTP.

Macintosh release: /wais/WAISTation-0-63@think.com
Unix release: /wais/wais-8-*.tar@think.com
NeXT release: /wais/WAISTation-NeXT-1.0.tar.Z@think.com
Telnet access: telnet quake.think.com login wais, password user@host
DOS Windows: /pub/wais/UNC/Windows@ftp.oit.unc.edu
Motif: /public/wais/motif-a1.tar.Z@think.com
IBM RS6000: /pub/misc/wais-8-b2-dist.tar.Z@ans.net
SunView: /pub/wais/sunsearch.src.*.tar.Z@samba.oit.unc.edu
VMS: /pub/wais/UNC*@samba.oit.unc.edu

>From Athena:

The latest version of WAIS is in AFS. An Athena user needs to ADD WAIS and then invoke the program by running the XWAIS program.

How to get more info.

A Quick Guide is available for the Macintosh and PC versions of the WAIS interface.

In addition, the WAIS Bibliography by Barbara Lincoln of Thinking Machines is available via anonymous ftp from quake.think.com. (/pub/wais/wais-discussion/bibliography.txt) Notification of progress and new releases are made know electronically. Anyone interested may subscribe to this mailing list by sending e-mail to wais-discussion-request@think.com.

Quick Guide - WAISTation

WAISTation (version .63.0) is the MAC interface to WAIS (Wide Area Information Servers). The WAISTation software allows users to locate and retrieve information from various database servers on the Internet. This program communicates with database servers using an extension of Z39.50, the ANSI standard for database retrieval applications. Some examples of databases current available include:

- * Sample articles from the Wall Street Journal

- * Columbia law library card catalog
- * Poetry from many classical and modern authors
- * Weather maps and forecasts
- * A collection of molecular biology abstracts
- * Receipts
- * the CIA World Factbook

...and much much more.

This quick guide answers the following questions.

- How can you get a copy of WAISStation?
- What do you need?
- What are the Initial Steps?
- What are the Basics?
- Where can you get more Information?

How can you get a copy of WAISStation?

The latest version of WAISStation(WAISStation-0-63.sit.hqx) is available via anonymous ftp from think.com. Everything that you need is in one compressed file, WAISStation-0-63.sit.hqx, in the /WAIS directory. Use MacIP to copy and convert the file using the BinHex transfer type. After you have successfully transferred and converted the file WAISStation 0.63 Release... will appear. This document must be decompressed using the Unstuffit program of Stuffit. The application program, some sample sources, and the WAISStation User Guide 0.57 may be selectively decompressed onto your Mac hard disk.

What do you need?

- * Your ram cache should be set to at least 32K. To check this look at the Memory icon on the Control Panels. The "Cache Size" should be >=32K.
- * You need at least 2 Megabytes of memory. To check this look at the Memory icon on the Control Panels. The "Available built in memory" should be >= 2M.
- * You must have MacTCP.
- * You must also be running Multifinder.

What are the Initial Steps?

To start the WAISStation program, double click on the WAISStation applications program. WAISStation will ask you if you want to find its Preference files or create a new one. Choose to create a new one. To use the sample sources provided, i.e. Directory -of-Servers and Connection-Machine Server you need to open the source by selecting Open Source... from the Source menu.. Once you open the source it appears in the Sources window. Now you are ready to begin!

What are the Basics?

Forming a Question

To form a question select New Question from the Question menu. Put the topic you are interested in the "Look for documents about" field, and drag potential sources, from the Sources window into the "In these sources" field, then RUN the question. Results will appear in the "Results" field. If the result is a .src file it is a source otherwise it is a document with can be used to refine your search. You may save your question at any point to pursue an alternative search strategy.

Finding and Adding a Source

To find a source you may want to begin your query with the Directory-of-Sources source. If there is information pertaining to your desired topic available, other sources will appear in the "Results" field. If you double click on one of these new sources a window will pop up describing the source. At this point you may choose to save the source by choosing Save from the Edit menu. This source will then appear in the Sources window and may be selected for subsequent questions. In order to keep track of your sources you may wish to file each additional source in the Sources folder.

Refining a Question

After you have made your initial run of your question you can refine your search by either adding additional sources to the "In these sources" field or by adding entries, either articles or sections of articles, to the field titled "Which are similar to". Of course you may also want to add or remove words in the sources field.

Where can you get more information?

The WAIStation User Guide is included in the decompressed file WAIStation-0.63. In addition the WAIS Bibliography by Barbara Lincoln of Thinking Machines is available via anonymous ftp from quake.think.com. The path is: /pub/wais/wais-discussion/bibliography.txt. Notification of progress and new releases are made know electronically. To subscribe to this mailing list send e-mail to wais-discussion-request@think.com

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